Looking to the Future

WSL sought feedback on the programs developed with LSTA funding through a variety of methods. These methods have included surveys, forums, and personal communication.

The 2000 survey of Washington libraries conducted in February and March 2000 netted 225 responses. The survey assessed the provision of WSL services to the Washington library community. What follows is a summary of the responses to questions pertaining to the grant program.

1. **The grants helped us to improve service to patrons.**
    Fifty-five individuals responded to this question. These individuals had been grant applicants. Among these, 71% agreed that LSTA grants helped to improve service to patrons. Only 7% disagreed and 22% did not have an opinion.

    Among library respondents who had applied for a Connectivity grant, public library respondents agreed 100%. A quarter of the academic and special library respondents had no opinion. The negative responses came from school library respondents, 14%. Across all categories, the majority of respondents agreed with the statement.

Respondent group/ type of response	The library applied for a Connectivity grant			
	All grant applicants	Public libraries	School libraries	All other libraries
Strongly or somewhat agree	70.9%	100.0%	54.4%	75.0%
Don't know	21.8%	0.0%	31.8%	25.0%
Strongly or somewhat disagree	7.3%	0.0%	13.6%	0.0%
Number of responses	55	15	22	8

2. **How satisfied are you with the spending priorities for federal funds used on statewide projects, grants, and other services provided to libraries?**
    Two hundred sixteen individuals responded to this questions. The majority of respondents expressed that they did not know, 61%. About a third, 34%, indicated satisfaction with the spending priorities. Only 5% indicated dissatisfaction.

    Of the respondents who had applied for a Connectivity grant, public libraries expressed the greatest satisfaction, 73%, or nearly three quarters. About a quarter of the school libraries, 26%, and academic and special libraries, 25%, expressed satisfaction with the setting of priorities. School libraries were more likely to state that they did know, 65%, than other libraries, and academic and special libraries were more likely than other types of libraries to express dissatisfaction, 50%.

Respondent group/ type of response	The library applied for a Connectivity grant			
	All respondents	Public libraries	School libraries	All other libraries
Strongly or somewhat agree	34.3%	73.4%	26.0%	25.0%
Don't know	60.6%	13.3%	65.2%	25.0%
Strongly or somewhat disagree	5.1%	13.3%	8.7%	50.0%
Number of responses	216	15	23	8

3. **How can we improve our grants process?**
   A summary of comments by category follows:
   - Process related
     - Keep applications, guidelines, and processes simple
     - Reduce paperwork that needs to be completed by applicants and sub-grantees

   - Deadline related
     - Need longer windows of opportunity to apply for grants
     - Keep away from certain times of year for opening and closing grant cycles
       - Start/close of state and federal fiscal years
       - Beginning/end of the school year
       - During school break
       - Around major conferences at the state, regional, and national level

   - Project/Applicant Eligibility related
     - Types of projects that are eligible are too focused – make grant cycles open to any need of the applicant
     - Offer grants in areas needed by all libraries

   - Notification related
     - Distribute notification more widely
     - More advance notification of upcoming grant cycles is needed
     - Market programs/grants better
     - Continue to send notification by mail
     - Send feedback and award summaries to all applicants
     - List criteria for award of grants in every grant cycle

   - Support and Training related
     - Keep forms available electronically
     - Need to have examples of previously funded projects available for review
     - Need more knowledgeable reviewers with subject expertise related to the grant cycle
     - Need more grant training for all types of libraries. In working with schools consider scheduling this training at Educational Service Districts on in-service days
     - Need a better explanation of what is required within the grant

4. **Indicate where you may need additional support.**
   Two hundred twenty-five individuals responded to this survey item. For all respondents, the top five categories were: 1) technology training, 32%; 2) grant writing/development, 28%; 3) electronic collection development, 27%; 4) reference, 21.8%; and 5) computer troubleshooting, 20%.

   Among those respondents who applied for a Connectivity grant, strong interest was expressed in grant writing/development, 60%; technology training, 42%; and computer troubleshooting, 40%. However, among these respondents, public and school librarians expressed other interest such as developing local support, 27%; children and young adult services, 27%; in addition to electronic collection development, 24%. There was insufficient response from academic and special libraries to discern any pattern of interest.

Most common answers		The library applied for a Connectivity grant			
Respondent group/ response	All respondents	All grant applicants	Public libraries	School libraries	All other libraries
Technology training	32.4%	42.2%	40.0%	33.3%	*
Grant writing/development	28.0%	60.0%	46.7%	75.0%	*
Electronic collection development	27.1%	24.4%	26.7%	16.7%	*
Reference	21.8%	17.8%	20.0%	12.5%	*
Computer troubleshooting	20.4%	40.0%	40.0%	37.5%	*
Graphics/templates for generic publications	18.7%	20.0%	13.3%	16.7%	0.0%
Collection development	17.3%	20.0%	0.0%	29.2%	*
Building facility design	16.0%	20.0%	33.3%	12.5%	0.0%
Developing local library support	15.6%	26.7%	26.7%	20.8%	*
Children/young adult services	13.3%	26.7%	13.3%	29.2%	*
Legal issues	12.4%	8.9%	6.7%	4.2%	0.0%
GIS	11.1%	17.8%	26.7%	8.3%	*
Working with local government or other authorities	9.8%	11.1%	20.0%	4.2%	0.0%
Trustee orientation and education	4.9%	6.7%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Facilitation of staffs/boards	4.4%	8.9%	13.3%	0.0%	*
Number of responses	225	45	15	24	8

*One or more respondents indicated the need for support in this area. Not enough response to judge overall interest.

Forums were held in October–November 2000 across Washington state in preparation for writing the *Five Year Plan, Designing Our Future, 2002–2007 Statewide Plan for Washington Libraries*. Forums were held in the following locations:
- Edmonds – Sno-Isle Regional Library – Edmonds Branch
- Spokane – Spokane Public Library – Main Library
- Tumwater – Timberland Regional Library – Service Center
- Yakima – Yakima Valley Regional Library – Main Library

Two forums were held by videoconference:
- Eastern Washington Videoconference – Ellensburg, Kennewick, Moses Lake, Wenatchee
- Western Washington Videoconference – Bremerton, Lacey, Mount Vernon, Vancouver

In addition, a survey of library directors was conducted online. As a result of the survey and forums, the following issues were identified:

Issues with potential solutions:
- Increase remote access to libraries for customers
  - Provide 24/7 access remotely for all types of libraries
  - Provide 24/7 reference
  - Have libraries be 211 call centers
  - Expand Internet availability

- Increase public visibility of libraries through marketing/public relations
  - Research and assess public perceptions
  - Link with Information Literacy effort
  - Develop a marketing campaign with local tie-in
  - Create a Web site, e.g., WAlib.org

- Increase funding and decrease competition for funding
  - Find more equitable support
  - Develop more creative funding, beyond property tax
  - Seek enabling legislation for sales or household tax, etc.

- Provide seamless service to customers despite jurisdictional boundaries
  - Have free ILL statewide as in Oregon
  - Have cooperative agreements for service
  - Have a statewide card
  - Work on protocols to, e.g., search catalogs or make collections available
  - Coordinate services, hours among libraries

- Improve children's services
  - Have training to do outreach, etc.
  - Have full time coordinator
  - Have coordination at a regional level

- Increase electronic resources

- Encourage coordination and collaboration among libraries
  - WSL as catalyst
  - Follow the SDL model
  - Have standard automation for public libraries

- Provide training for staff and address recruitment and retention
  - Provide mentoring
  - Provide distance education, esp. for library technicians
  - Provide centralized training
  - Match local learners with local trainers
  - Use the SDL Project as a model for providing training

- Increase up-to-date technology and access for public
  - Ensure increased speed and access
  - Influence vendors for software that is intuitive and accommodates limitations

- Provide resources and services to meet diversity of communities
  - Have centralized selection/catalog of multi-lingual books
  - Recruit/train staff on diversity
  - Statewide multi-lingual collection

- Continue consortia purchasing, including the SDL Project

- Maintain broad collections – print
  - Provide better access to information through both a physical library and a "virtual" library

- Increase support of school libraries
  - Provide more LSTA funds for collaborative projects
  - Market services to own boards
  - Develop more clout within K-12
  - Increase regional cooperation among library type
  - Legitimization from outside

- Increase information competency of staff and public

- Develop services, facilities, and programs that are responsive to community needs
  - Invite citizens to board meetings for input
  - Work at building community connections
  - Increase parent and community volunteer involvement
  - Reach out and include all parts of the community in library activities

From the implementation of and the discussion on projects, programs, and grants, from our receipt of feedback from various surveys and statewide plan forums, and from review and discussion of the general evaluation report, ideas for lessons learned and future directions were developed.